

## **WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION**

Meeting Minutes – September 12, 2007

Nature Center, Ouabache Trails Park

3500 N. Lower Fort Knox Road

Vincennes, Indiana

### **Voting Members Present:**

Adams County – John Friedt

Allen County – Ron Zartman

Carroll County – George Mears

DNR – Steve Morris

Gibson County – N. Sherrell Marginet

Knox County – Shane Cooper

Miami County – Ken Einselen

Posey County – Ralph Weinzapfel

Sullivan County – John Gettinger

Tippecanoe County – Norman (Lucky) Neiburger

Vigo County – Keith Ruble (alternate)

Warren County – Louise Jewell

### **Non-Voting Members Present:**

Indiana Office of Tourism – Brian Blackford

INDOT – Ray Irvin

### **Commission and DNR Staff Present:**

Ron James – WRHCC Executive Director

Cynthia Webb – DNR Customer Service Clerk

### **Proxies:**

Mercedes Brugh to John Gettinger

Ernest Passwater to John Gettinger

Mike Mettler to John Gettinger

### **Voting Members Absent w/o Proxy:**

Jay County

Parke County

Vermillion County

Wells County

### **Non-Voting Members Not Present:**

IDEM

DNR Historic Preservation &  
Archaeology

### **Guests:**

Don Jewell

## **CALL TO ORDER**

John Gettinger called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. John asked everyone to introduce themselves and the county or organization they represented.

## **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE JULY 11<sup>TH</sup> MEETING MINUTES**

John asked for approval of the July 11<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Lucky Neiburger made a motion to approve the minutes. George Mears seconded, and the minutes were approved as written.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

John Gettinger spoke of taking Vermillion County eighth grade classes rafting along the Wabash River. This took place on August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

John announced that Merom purchased the rights to put in trails and use the island to the north of the Merom access point at the base of Merom bluff along the Wabash River.

John also announced Turtle Creek partnership is looking to use watershed funds on Busseron Creek, which flows into the Wabash River.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** (see attached)

Ron James informed members the embroidery stitch-out of the WRHCC logo is available to all and to get in touch with him if anybody is interested in it.

Ron reported on Paul McAfee's presentation about the WRHCC to the Allen County Commissioners. There will be a follow-up meeting with Commissioner Bill Brown.

Ron reported the WFYI Documentary on the Wabash River won an Emmy in the Cleveland Midwest Regional.

Ron also reported that, with Steve Morris' help, he completed the IDOA real estate survey.

Ron announced that Ray Irvin has been appointed to the commission as InDOT's non-voting representative.

## **FINANCE REPORT** (see attached)

Steve Morris distributed copies of the latest commission financial report.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Education**

John Gettinger reported 2007's Sullivan County 8<sup>th</sup> Grade River Rafting will be October 2-4. There is an excursion for sponsors and volunteers on October 1<sup>st</sup>. John gave an open invitation for volunteers. A motion was made by Ralph Weinzapfel to donate \$250.00 to support the River Rafting Expedition. Keith Ruble seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **River Community Signs and River Road Signs**

Steve Morris reported the Purchase Order for the signs was complete and the funds have been encumbered. It was decided to buy and have some hardware available for mounting the signs. There was a discussion about sign placement and the need to insure the 'road' connects when going from one county to the next. A River Community & Roads committee was formed with membership initially of Louise Jewell, Sherrell Marginet, Ray Irvin, George Mears, and Ken Einselen.

### **Water Trail**

Steve Morris reported on the status of the bridge sign purchase. PEN Products claimed to have never received the purchase order for the sign purchase. The purchase order has since been re-submitted. Pen Products needs to know where to place the holes on the bridge sign. After some discussion it was decided to incorporate two sets of holes.

Ron James reported the Vermillion stretch of the trail opened at the Little Italy Festival on Labor Day. Mentioned in the Clinton newspaper, about seventy people were in attendance.

### **Banks of the Wabash, Inc. (BOW)**

Ken Einselen reported that the last BOW meeting was held in Lafayette, Indiana, in June. The next meeting will be in Terre Haute next Wednesday, September 19, 2007. Mini-Grant (<\$500) deadline is October 1<sup>st</sup>. Banks of the Wabash received over \$13,000.00 of River Odyssey auction proceeds by donation from David Dale and Jim Faulkner.

### **Legislative**

Lucky Neiburger reported the meeting with DNR Director Carter went well. Lucky would like to focus on securing funding for Corridor projects in preparation for the state bicentennial. With this in mind, the Commissioners need to start working with their legislators. Lucky suggested the upcoming WREC symposium as an opportunity to build rapport with legislators. Lucky Neiburger, Ron James, Steve Morris, John Gettinger, Louise Jewell, and George Mears plan to attend this “Greening the Region” Symposium.

### **Video project**

Ken has been collecting information for the video, both historically and chronologically. Ken and Shane have lots of possible angles. Suggestions were to explore themes such as “Trail of Tears” or “Natives along the Wabash”. Keith Ruble also suggested pre-history.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **River Odyssey**

The River Odyssey artists were presented with the Banks of the Wabash education award at the sneak preview on August 23<sup>rd</sup> in Carmel. Ron James made a presentation about the river and the artists’ work. Ken Einselen presented the awards on behalf of BOW.

Louise Jewell reported the auction on August 25<sup>th</sup> was a lot of fun. To a standing room only crowd, Ron was given the opportunity to tell a couple of interpretive stories about the River and had our display up. Louise mentioned that paintings went for as much as \$6,000.00.

#### **River Alliance & Rally committee formation**

Ron James wrote two letters to the new president of Hanover College in support of The Rivers Institute and the Indiana Rivers Rally. National River Rally is May 2-5, 2008, at Sawmill Creek Resort, Huron, OH. Everyone was asked to save those dates.

#### **Mid-America Trails & Greenway Conference**

Steve Morris passed out information about the Mid America Trails & Greenways Conference being held December 9-12, 2007 in Chicago. Pre-registration deadline is November 2, 2007. WRHCC is a sponsor of the conference.

#### **State Fair report from August 17<sup>th</sup>**

Ron James reported the booth at Visit Indiana Day at the State Fair resulted in 500 (+/-) WRHCC brochures being given out along with Banks of the Wabash brochures.

#### **Paddlefest, New Harmony, report from August 18<sup>th</sup>**

This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Paddlefest. Continuing to grow, the event put 200 to 250 canoes on the river. Unfortunately, the event needs sponsorship as it is reported to have lost \$3000 due to the cost of transporting canoes from and to the Blue River livery. Ralph Weinzapfel and Sherrell Marginet shared ideas to expand the Paddlefest, having events corridor-wide.

#### **Lafayette office to be shared with Wabash Riverkeeper**

Lucky Neiburger reported the landlord has given the green light to share our office with the Wabash Riverkeeper, Rae Schnapp.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Oil and Gas Royalties**

Ray Irvin proposed a resolution funding the Corridor Fund. Ray proposed the Commission resolve that it is appropriate that royalties, received from oil, gas and minerals taken from under the navigable waters of Indiana, be invested in the Corridor. Ray requested Ron James finalize the resolution language, to be considered in November, for presentation to the governor and legislators (see attached). Ray recommended the Commission compile project budgets for the next five to ten years to let the legislators know the Corridor needs.

### **Cultural committee**

With the end of the River Odyssey program, Louise Jewell moved that a “Cultural Committee” be formed. The motion was seconded by Lucky Neiburger and the motion carried. Louise will look to recruit arts-oriented members, from within as well as outside the Commission, to capitalize on the Odyssey’s notoriety with a follow-up project.

### **Banks of the Wabash River “Rewards”**

Banks of the Wabash is seeking nominations for awards (recreational, environmental, sustainable development and educational categories) pertaining to the Wabash River.

### **Upper Wabash River Basin Commission**

Ron James reported that the letter supporting the 319 implementation grant was sent.

### **Projects for Corridor/Indiana’s 2016 Birthday Party**

Lucky Neiburger spoke of preparing for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of statehood. Ray Irvin suggested Judy O’ Bannon should be contacted as she is taking an interest in preparations.

### ***L’Esprit de Ouabache and Reflections* newsletters**

Ron James needs articles even if only one or two paragraphs long.

### **Indiana Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) Trails Workshop**

Steve Morris made a motion to have Ron James attend the IPRA trails workshop. Lucky Neiburger seconded and the motion carried.

### **Announcements**

Steve Morris reminded everyone that this is an appointment year for the Commission. All were requested to help their county commissioners in this regard.

John Gettinger thanked Shane Cooper for the group tour of George Rogers Clark Historic Site and refreshments.

Lucky Neiburger moved for adjournment and Louise Jewell seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: November 14, 2007, 1 PM, Conference Rooms 1 & 2, at the Indiana Government Center in Indianapolis.